THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) The performance of domestic methanol industry and import figures do not reflect so.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) At present there is no proposal to enhance import duty on methanol.

Public Telephones in the NER

*618. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed and actual achievements made during the last three years, year-wise in respect of public telephones installed in the rural and urban areas of the North-Eastern Region with special reference to Assam; and

(b) the reasons for difference in achievements and the targets?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) The target and achievement in respect of Public Telephones in rural and urban areas in North-Eastern Region including Assam during the last three years are as under:—

Year		Assam		North-East (excluding Assam)	
		Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement
1997-98	Rural	4000	2484	1000	474
	Urban	2000	787	1200	691
1998-99	Rural	2400	2907	1000	404
	Urban	2000	980	1000	830
1999-2000	Rural	3000	826	2000	303
	Urban	1100	1885	600	819

The reasons for shortfall are as under:—

Public Telephones installed in Rural Areas

— non-availability of suitable technology as MARR technology did not prove to be very reliable;

— non-availability of equipment in time;

— inadequate infrastructure in rural areas like stable power supply & efficient road communications;

— difficult and inaccessible terrain;

— insurgency.

Public Telephones installed in Urban Areas

— non-availability of spare capacity in some of the exchanges;

— non-availability of STD facility; and

— low demand and sparse population.

Inclusion of items in wholesale Price Index

†*619. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred question 536 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 29th February, 2000 and state:

(a) whether some of the items which are included in the old system of determination of WPI have been excluded in the new system; and

(b) if so, the names of such items?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) To reflect the structural changes that have taken place in the economy since 1981-82, a large number of new commodities have been added in the new Wholesale Price Index (WPI) series with base 1993-94=100 and a few commodities with diminished importance have been dropped.

136 new items have been included in the new series and 150 items of the earlier series have been dropped due to their having become insignificant in terms of their relative value of production in the economy. There has also been an amalgamation of certain items with other items because of their similarity of characteristics and for making their description more meaningful. Further, some items have

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.